



C O N T E N T S .

1. Report and Evidence from the Select Committee on the Health of Towns. 1840. (Chairman: R.A. Slaney.)

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R E P O R T

FROM THE

SELECT COMMITTEE

ON

THE HEALTH OF TOWNS;

TOGETHER WITH THE

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

TAKEN BEFORE THEM,

AND

AN APPENDIX, AND INDEX.

*Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
17 June 1840.*

Jovis, 12^o die Martii, 1840.

Ordered, THAT a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the Circumstances affecting the Health of the Inhabitants of Large Towns and Populous Districts, with a View to Improved Sanatory Regulations for their benefit.

Martis, 17^o die Martii, 1840.

And a Committee is nominated of—

Mr. Slaney, <i>R A</i>	Sir Harry Verney.
Lord James Stuart.	Mr. Baines.
Lord Viscount Sandon.	Mr. Oswald.
Mr. John Ponsonby.	Mr. Tufnell.
Mr. Cowper.	Mr. Brotherton.
Mr. Greene.	Mr. Ingham.
Mr. Richard Walker.	Mr. William Smith O'Brien.
Mr. Wilson Patten.	

Ordered, THAT the Committee have power to send for Persons, Papers, and Records.

Ordered, THAT Five be the Quorum of the Committee.

Ordered, THAT the Committee have power to report Observations.

Jovis, 2^o die Aprilis, 1840.

Ordered, THAT Mr. W. S. O'Brien and Lord Sandon be discharged from further attendance, and that Mr. Vigors and Mr. Mackinnon be added to the Committee.

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R E P O R T.

THE SELECT COMMITTEE appointed to Inquire into the Circumstances affecting the HEALTH of the INHABITANTS of LARGE TOWNS and POPULOUS DISTRICTS, with a View to Improved Sanatory Regulations for their Benefit, and who were empowered to Report their Observations, together with the MINUTES OF EVIDENCE taken before them, to The House;— HAVE considered the Matters to them referred, and have agreed to the following REPORT :

YOUR Committee have inquired carefully into the matters submitted to them, and find that sanatory regulations in many of the principal towns of the realm are most imperfect and neglected, and that hence result great evils, suffering, and expense, to large bodies of the community. They have proposed several remedies; viz. general Acts to facilitate regulations in building, sewerage, and local improvements, applicable to populous districts; also the establishment of boards of health and local inspectors, and have made other suggestions detailed in their Report.

Before entering into the result of their inquiries, Your Committee venture to lay before The House a few preliminary observations respecting the important subject which has been entrusted to their consideration.

By reference to the Population Returns it appears that, from the beginning of the present century, the whole population of Great Britain has increased at the rate of nearly 16 per cent. every 10 years; from 1801 to 1811, thence to 1821, and again to 1831; and there is every reason to believe about the same rate of increase will be found to have taken place next year, when the next decennial return will be made. Whilst, however, such has been the increase in the population of the kingdom at large, reference to the same returns shows, that the augmentation of numbers in the great towns of the realm has been much more rapid: thus, whilst the increase of population in England and Wales, in 30 years, from 1801 to 1831, has been something more than 47 per cent., the actual increase in the number of inhabitants of five of our most important provincial towns has very nearly doubled that rate; being

Manchester	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	109	per cent.
Glasgow	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	108	—
Birmingham	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	73	—
Leeds	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	99	—
Liverpool	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100	— ⁽¹⁾

giving an average increase of almost 98 per cent. in five cities, whose united population in 1831 amounted to 844,700, and at the present time may be calculated at not less than 1,126,000. Far the larger portion of this vast body of persons are engaged constantly in occupations connected with manufactures or commerce.

In many other of our large towns the increase in numbers has been of a like nature, and though not so rapid in several of them, yet, from a document lately

⁽¹⁾ Population Returns.

lately laid before Parliament, and compiled by authority, it appears that on a comparison of a large rural district with various provincial and other towns (within or contiguous to it), the increase in population in the former, during 10 years (1821 to 1831), was 11 per cent., and in the latter 31 per cent., showing that the numbers in towns augmented almost three times as fast as in the country⁽²⁾.

By reference to the Population Returns, we find that the proportion of the humbler classes occupied as manufacturers or workmen, and living in towns, is, as compared with the labourers in rural districts, completely changed.

It appears, by returns laid before The House, that the latter class was to the former, in 1790, about two to one; and now the town workmen and manufacturers, instead of being one-half, are nearly double the number of rural labourers⁽³⁾.

It must be evident, that owing to this rapid increase in the population of great towns, the proportion of the humbler classes, of those with little leisure for education or improvement, will be augmented, as the more wealthy and educated gradually withdraw themselves from these close and crowded communities; which thus more and more stand in need of some superintending paternal care.

The difference in the proportion of numbers entirely occupied in labour is very different in different places. An account laid before Your Committee, and to which they believe due reliance may be given, states this proportion to vary from 64 per cent. in the borough of Manchester, to 74 in Salford, 81 in Ashton, and 94 in Duckinfield⁽⁴⁾.

Your Committee venture to remark, that the great towns of the realm may be divided into classes differing from each other in various circumstances, yet all requiring, more or less, the enforcement of sanitary regulations calculated for the benefit of their inhabitants. As,

1. The Metropolis.
2. Manufacturing Towns.
3. Populous Seaport Towns.
4. Great Watering Places.
5. County and other considerable Inland Towns not being the seats of particular Manufactures.

Besides these different classes of towns, there are various places, especially in the mining districts, in which a vast population of the working classes are spread irregularly over the face of the country, in some spots closely packed together, and in others dispersed in groups of dwellings more or less distinct from each other.

Your Committee have only been able to inquire into the state of a portion of these towns; to have done more would have occupied them many months; but have thought they best fulfilled the trust committed to them, by confining their investigation to the condition of certain populous towns, or sometimes parts of towns, which might be considered samples of others similarly situated. They have especially directed their attention to localities in which the working and poorer classes chiefly reside, with a view, if evils are found to exist there within reach of legislative remedy, to make such suggestions of improvement as may appear practicable.

Before giving the result of their inquiries, and any abstract of the evidence adduced

⁽²⁾ Abstract First Report of Registrar-general of Births, Deaths, &c. 1840.

⁽³⁾ Abstract Population Returns, 1831.

⁽⁴⁾ Report on the State of Working Classes in a Manufacturing District, by Manchester Statistical Society, 1837.—*Vide* Riddall Wood's evidence.

adduced before them, they would say that considerable differences in the average state of the dwellings of the working classes, as might be expected, will be found to exist in different districts, arising sometimes from local causes, as the nature of the soil or situation, or the vicinity of a stream; and in others from the customs of the place, the nature of the occupations of the people, efficient or neglected municipal regulations.

Notwithstanding considerable allowance is to be made for these circumstances, Your Committee think it may be laid down as a general position, that persons of the same class, and engaged in the same sort of occupations in different populous towns, are subject, more or less, to the same evils (which are hereafter spoken to in evidence), that their health and comfort are affected by the same causes, and that the remedies suggested by Your Committee would be applicable to improve the condition of all or most of them.

Your Committee, therefore, believe that the account given of the state of certain districts inhabited by the working classes in Manchester⁽⁵⁾ would be applicable to other great towns, in which the people are chiefly employed in the cotton manufacture; that the same might be said of Leeds, with respect to those busied in the woollen fabrics, and such a general resemblance will be found in towns similarly situated, that the same suggestions which would be applicable to one might, with some variation, be beneficially extended to all.

By the Report lately laid before Parliament, it appears that the mortality and diseases of cities vary greatly, and of parts of the same city. Thus, the annual mortality of Whitechapel is shown to be nearly four per cent., whilst that of Hackney, Camberwell, and St. George's, Hanover-square, is less than half that amount, and it is found, from "a comparison of the several districts, that, *cæteris paribus*, the mortality increases as the density of the population increases, and where the density and the population are the same, that the rate of mortality depends upon the efficiency of the ventilation and of the means which are employed for the removal of impurities⁽⁶⁾."

Your Committee now proceed to give an abstract of the principal points in the evidence submitted to them. They have made inquiries into the state of the dwellings of the poorer classes in various parts of the metropolis, in Dublin, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, Hull, Birmingham, Coventry, and several other large towns, and though there is a great difference in many of the cases examined, they would state, as a general result, that evils of a most extensive and afflicting nature are found to prevail, affecting the health and comfort of vast bodies of their fellow-subjects, and which might be removed or much lessened by due sanitary regulations.

Evidence has been laid before them, depicting the miserably neglected condition of the abodes of multitudes of the working classes in Bethnal Green, Whitechapel, portions of Wapping, Ratcliffe Highway, the parish of Stepney, and other districts in the east of London; an account of which has already been laid before Parliament in a "Report to the Poor Law Commissioners on the prevalence of certain physical causes of fever in the metropolis, which might be removed by certain sanitary regulations;" and which is printed in the Fourth Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners⁽⁷⁾.

The same remarks apply, though with somewhat diminished force, to various other districts of London inhabited by the poorer classes, especially parts of the Holborn Union, of St. Olaves, and St. George's Union, Southwark, and

⁽⁵⁾ Mr. Riddall Wood's evidence.

⁽⁶⁾ First Report Registrar-general on Births, Deaths, &c.; also Journal London Statistical Society, July 1839.

⁽⁷⁾ *Vide* Dr. Arnott's evidence.

and to portions of Lambeth, Bermondsey (⁽¹⁾), Walworth, Peckham, Vauxhall; and several other places.

The prevalence of fever and other disorders in these districts is attributed in great measure to the neglected state of the different localities, and is detailed in Dr. Arnott's evidence, p. 33, applicable more especially to the crowded eastern parts of London; viz.

1. Houses and courts and alleys without privies, without covered drains, and with only open surface gutters, so ill made that the fluid in many places was stagnant.

2. Large open ditches containing stagnant liquid filth.

3. Houses dirty beyond description, as if never washed or swept, and extremely crowded with inhabitants. "Heaps of refuse and rubbish, vegetable and animal remains, at the bottoms of close courts, and in corners."

In answer to the question, "Do you feel any doubt that the cases of fever and ill health you noticed arose from some of those causes?" the answer of Dr. Arnott is, "I have not the slightest doubt of it." Reference was then made by the Committee to the Report to the Poor Law Commissioners before alluded to, and the question is asked, "You state remedially at the top of page 14?" "We have no doubt that by proper sanitary police regulations, such as a board of health might decide upon, the typhoid fevers of London and other places might be made to disappear; and we think the remedial measures would cost less than it now costs to parishes and public charities to take care of the sick, and to provide for the helpless orphans and widows of those who die." "Is that your confirmed opinion?" *Answer*: "Yes, it is." This is stated to be applicable not merely to the crowded district east of London, but to any crowded districts of large towns in the realm.

Evidence of undoubted credit, and of the most melancholy description, has been laid before Your Committee, showing the neglected and imperfect state of the sewerage, paving, and cleansing in many parts of London inhabited chiefly by the working classes (⁽²⁾); and similar evidence applies with more or less force to many other great towns, the state of which has been investigated, as Dublin, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, &c.

Your Committee do not wish to go here into details as to the miserable and neglected state of the dwellings of the poorer classes in various districts of the metropolis and other large towns, but refer to the evidence for that purpose, in which statements of the most melancholy and appalling nature will be found. It will there be seen, that the sewerage, draining, and cleansing is (in many places inhabited by dense masses of the working classes) greatly neglected; that the most necessary precautions to preserve their health in many cases appears to have been forgotten; that in consequence fevers and other disorders of a contagious and fatal nature are shown to prevail to a very alarming extent, causing wide-spread misery among the families of the sufferers, often entailing weakness and prostration of strength among the survivors; and becoming the source of great expense to the parishes and more opulent classes.

On these points Your Committee would refer to the evidence of Dr. Arnott, Dr. Southwood Smith, Mr. F. Moseley, and Messrs. J. Miller, Wagstaffe, Evans, J. Clarke, J. Wood Wilkes, E. White, Walker, &c. Many details will be found in the testimony of these gentlemen well worthy the attention of the Legislature, and exemplifying the severe and extensive evils borne by the humbler classes from neglect of proper sanitary regulations and precautions.

Your

(¹) Mr. Wagstaffe's evidence; Mr. Moseley's ditto.

(²) *Vide* evidence of Messrs. Stodhart and Peeke.

Your Committee would also refer to the valuable Report of Dr. Arnott and Dr. Kay on the sanitary state of the labouring classes before alluded to, the substance of which has been verified before them on examination⁽⁹⁾. They cannot refrain from quoting a few lines from a paper laid before them by Dr. Southwood Smith, whose valuable evidence on the state of several districts of the east of London will be found well worth perusal. It is headed, "Abstract of a Report on the prevalence of Fever in Twenty Metropolitan Unions, during the year 1838," and is printed in the Appendix.

Dr. Smith (who has personally inspected the districts alluded to), shows by Returns stated, that in 20 metropolitan unions, giving nearly 14,000 cases of fever, above 9,000 were "afforded by seven of the unions only, namely, Whitechapel, Lambeth, Stepney, St. George-the-Martyr, Bethnal Green, Holborn, and St. George-in-the-East." These are at once the most populous and the poorest districts; and it is here that fever is "constantly committing its ravages. *It is utterly impossible for any description to convey to the mind an adequate conception of the filthy and poisonous condition in which large portions of all these districts constantly remain.*"

The Returns show that out of 5,692 cases of typhus in all the 20 unions, 4,002 were yielded by the seven unions specified as pre-eminently malarian districts.

Dr. Smith continues: "It appears that out of 77,000 persons who have received parochial relief, 14,000 have been attacked with fever; one-fifth part of the whole; and that 1,300 have died. It should be borne in mind that there is no disease which brings so much affliction on a poor man's family as fever; it commonly attacks the heads of the family, upon whose daily labour the subsistence of the family depends." The present Returns afford melancholy evidence of the pauperising influence of this wide-spreading and mortal disease. *They show that while one-fifth of the whole pauper population in the year in question was attacked with fever, in Bethnal Green the proportion was one-third, in Whitechapel it was nearly one-half, and in St. George-the-Martyr it was 1,276 out of 1,467.*

"Placing out of consideration (continues our benevolent informant) the suffering of the individual attacked with fever, which however is one of the most painful maladies to which the human being is subject; placing out of view also the distress brought upon all the members of the family of the sick, it is plain that this disease is one of the main causes of pressure upon the poor-rates. That pressure must continue, and the same large sums of money must be expended year after year for the support of families afflicted with fever, as long as those dreadful sources of fever which encompass the habitations of the poor are allowed to remain. They would not, they could not be allowed to remain, if their nature were really understood, and if the ease with which the most urgent of them might be removed were known.

"But there do not appear to be any practicable means of removing them without legislative interference; and if the care of the public health be a part of the duty of the Legislature; if in the metropolis unions, which alone include a population of 851,000 souls, it be certain that conditions exist which are absolutely incompatible with the public health, and which conditions are to a very considerable extent removable; and if it shall be found that similar conditions exist in all the large towns in Great Britain, here would seem to be a proper and legitimate field for the exercise of legislative wisdom and power."

The prevalence of fevers and other diseases arising from neglect of due sanitary regulations, is by no means confined to the populous districts of the metropolis above described; but the same causes appear to produce the same effects,

(9) Reports on the Sanitary State of the Labouring Classes, &c. 1839.

effects, in a greater or less degree, in all our great towns⁽¹⁾. In some of them these evils, and the misery consequent upon them, is much increased by peculiar faults in the form and construction of the humble dwellings of the poorer classes. This seems owing to the want of all proper regulations in any general Building Act, applicable to the poorer class of houses in these crowded districts, for preserving due space and ventilation.

Thus in Liverpool there are upwards of 7,800 inhabited cellars, occupied by upwards of 39,000 persons, being one-fifth of all the working classes in that great town; and an account of undoubted veracity states, "that the great proportion of these inhabited cellars were dark, damp, confined, ill-ventilated, and dirty."

In Manchester also, nearly 15,000 persons, being almost 12 per cent. of the working population, live in cellars; and in the adjacent town of Salford, 3,300⁽²⁾. Such an habitation must almost necessarily be unhealthy, as it implies the impracticability of proper drainage and ventilation.

Another form of construction of houses for the working classes, which Your Committee considers highly injurious to the health of the inmates, prevails extensively in many large towns⁽³⁾, and especially in Liverpool; viz. the position of rows of small houses in close courts, built up at the sides and end, and having only one entrance, frequently under a narrow archway.

The evils arising from this cause are much increased when it is found, as in Liverpool, that it is combined with another error in the construction of rows of these houses, viz. that they are placed back to back, so as to exclude the possibility of thorough ventilation.

It has been stated to Your Committee, that there are in Liverpool about 2,400 courts, chiefly of this construction, containing an estimated population of about 86,000 of the working classes, in addition to 38,000 living in cellars⁽⁴⁾. Independent of this faulty construction, so injurious to the health of the inhabitants, the state of most of these courts is described as almost utterly neglected, with no underground sewers, and no attention to cleansing, with no inspection of any kind, and the surface gutters frequently almost choked with filth.

These courts are thus described by Dr. Duncan, an intelligent physician resident at Liverpool:—"Very few have an entrance wider than four feet, and that is by an archway built over it; the width is from 9 to 15 feet between the rows; there is one only six feet. The backs of the houses in one court are built against the backs of houses in another court; at the further end there is generally an ash pit between two privies; they are in the most abominable state of filth⁽⁵⁾."

It is scarcely possible to conceive any construction more prejudicial to the health of the inhabitants.

"The stench arising from these causes is such, in some of the courts, as to render it almost impossible to remain for any time in them."

The great mortality of Liverpool is noticed⁽⁶⁾, and a question is asked, "Do you know whether fevers have prevailed in Liverpool?" to which the answer is, "Yes, fever is the great complaint of these people."

Does

(1) As to Glasgow, Mr. Symons's evidence; Liverpool, Dr. Duncan's; Leeds, Dr. Williamson's; Manchester, Mr. Robertson's letter, &c. &c.; Mr. Fletcher's evidence.

(2) Report of Statistical Society of Manchester, 1838; Mr. Cobden's evidence; Mr. Riddall Wood's; Dr. Duncan's.

(3) *Vide* Mr. Pennethorne's evidence as to parts of London; Riddall Wood's, as to courts in Hull, &c.

(4) Dr. Duncan's evidence; Mr. Riddall Wood; Report Statistical Society of Manchester.

(5) Evidence, p. 142. *Vide* Plate, showing the form of these close courts.

(6) In 1839, one in 33½; Dr. Duncan, 2428.

“ Does that arise in any measure from the want of ventilation and cleanliness in these dwellings?—*A.* There can be no doubt of that; I found fever most prevalent in those districts where there is most neglect of cleanliness and ventilation.”

“ Can you give any facts with respect to any particular localities where fever has been for a length of time; or where it frequently prevails?—*A.* I can state the average number of cases of fever attended annually by the dispensaries, and the proportion of those occurring in courts; the average number during the last five years was upwards of 5,000, exclusive of the cases occurring among the members of clubs and friendly societies, of which there are many in Liverpool; that is about one in 35 in all classes of the population; that in the courts is about two-fifths, and between one-half and one-quarter in the cellars (7).”

Again, it is said, “ The proportion of cases of fever occurring among the inhabitants of cellars is about 35 per cent. more than it ought to be, calculating the proportion of the inhabitants of the cellars to the whole population; the mortality of Liverpool was last year one in 33½.”

It appears that this kind of property is constantly increasing; is a very profitable and tempting investment; is the cause of great cost to the community, but contributes but little to the parochial burthens (8), as it is stated there are 16,800 cottages in the parish of Liverpool assessed under 12*l.* per annum, and of that number only 900 contribute to the rates, and their contribution is 700*l.* on a levy of 10,000*l.*

Your Committee would pause, from the sad statements they have been obliged to make, to observe, that it is painful to contemplate, in the midst of what appears an opulent, spirited, and flourishing community, such a vast multitude of our poorer fellow subjects, the instruments by whose hands these riches were created, condemned, for no fault of their own, to the evils so justly complained of, and placed in situations where it is almost impracticable for them to preserve health or decency of deportment, or to keep themselves and their children from moral and physical contamination; to require them to be clean, sober, cheerful, contented, under such circumstances would be a vain and unreasonable expectation (9). There is no building Act to enforce the dwellings of these workmen being properly constructed; no draining Act to enforce their being efficiently drained; no general or local regulation to enforce the commonest provisions for cleanliness and comfort.

It appears to Your Committee, that where such evils are found to follow from the neglect or inability in these respects of local authorities, that it is the duty of the Legislature to take efficient steps to protect so numerous and valuable a portion of the community.

These evils, arising from the malconstruction and crowded state of their dwellings; the absence of a good system of sewerage, and all adequate inspection and cleansing of the courts and alleys in which they reside, are found to exist in like manner in many parts of the metropolis, in Manchester, Leeds, Bradford, Glasgow, and other large towns.

Thus,

(7) Dr. Duncan, p. 143.

(8) Page 145.

(9) With these facts before us, it is not surprising that the number of reckless and worthless characters should be considerable in Liverpool, viz. 1 in 45 of the whole population. The cost of those living on the public, and by other than honest means, is calculated annually at no less than 700,000*l.*—*Vide* Report of Commissioners on Constabulary Force, 1838, p. 18.

REPORT FROM THE

MANCHESTER.

Thus, in Manchester, the capital as it may be called of the cotton trade ⁽¹⁾, with a population of not less than 240,000 nearly 15,000 ⁽²⁾ of the poorer inhabitants, constantly inhabit cellars. Though the habitations of the working classes are described as better than those of Liverpool, the want of proper building regulations, and any effectual sewerage and cleansing, as applicable to the localities inhabited by the workmen, is most justly complained of ⁽³⁾.

Your Committee would here beg to quote a few lines from an able letter, which will be found in the Appendix, written by J. Robertson, esq. an eminent surgeon, residing at Manchester, to the Chairman. After adverting to the former disgraceful state of the streets and drains, he bears testimony to the zeal of the authorities in carrying on salutary improvements in these respects, "especially when it is known that no street can be paved and sewered without the consent of the owners of property, unless a certain large proportion of the land on either side is built upon. Owing to this cause, several important streets remain to this hour disgraceful nuisances.

"Manchester," continues the writer, "has no Building Act, and hence, with the exception of certain central streets, over which the Police Act gives the Commissioners power, each proprietor builds as he pleases. New cottages, with or without cellars, huddled together, row behind row, may be seen springing up in many parts. With such proceedings as these the authorities cannot interfere. A cottage row may be badly drained, the streets may be full of pits, brimful of stagnant water, the receptacles of dead dogs and cats, yet no one may find fault.

"The number of cellar-residences you have probably learned, from the papers published by the Manchester Statistical Society, is very great in all quarters of the town ⁽⁴⁾; and even in Hulme, a large portion of which consists of cottages recently erected, the same practice is continued. That it is an evil must be obvious, on the slightest consideration; for how can a hole underground, of from 12 to 15 feet square, admit of ventilation, so as to fit it for a human habitation?" "We have no authorized inspector of dwellings and streets."

After remarking that, when well fed, the families of working people maintain their health in a surprising manner, even in cellars and other close dwellings, he states, "That in 1833, 1834, 1835, 1836 (years of prosperity), the number of fever cases admitted into the Manchester House of Recovery, amounted to only 421 per annum; whilst, in two pinching years, 1838 and 1839, the number admitted was 1,207 per annum."

"It is," adds this benevolent gentleman, "in such a depressed state of the manufacturing districts as at present exists, that unpaved and badly sewered streets, narrow alleys, close, unventilated courts and cellars, exhibit their malign influence in augmenting the sufferings which that greatest of all physical evils, want of sufficient food, inflicts on young and old in large towns, *but especially on the young.*"

"Manchester," he adds, "has no public park, or other ground where the population can walk and breathe the fresh air, and, in this respect, is disgracefully defective, more so, perhaps, than any town in the empire ⁽⁵⁾."

Your

⁽¹⁾ The amount of property rateable to the relief of the poor in the borough of Manchester is 821,939 *l.*—*Vide* Return to Parliament as to Police, &c., May 1840, No. 311.

⁽²⁾ 14,960, being 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the working population; and in the adjoining town of Salford, 3,335, being 8 per cent., p. 107-8, R. Cobden's evidence.

⁽³⁾ *Vide* Report on the State of the Working Classes in a large Manufacturing District, the substantial accuracy of which account was verified before Your Committee, p. 107, and which comprises an account of towns inhabited by above 322,000 persons, including Manchester, Salford, Bury, Ashton, Staleybridge, and Dukinfield. *Vide* also Mr. Fletcher's evidence, 1264, &c.

⁽⁴⁾ 14,960. *Vide* ante.

⁽⁵⁾ Mr. Robertson's letter, in the Appendix.

Your Committee have dwelt longer on the state of Manchester and Liverpool than they should otherwise have done, because these great towns are so much supported by, and connected with, the cotton manufacture, which employs a greater amount of capital and workmen than any other in this empire, or, perhaps, in any quarter of the globe, and which is rapidly increasing in importance, and the number of persons occupied in it is constantly augmenting.

It seems alike a matter of duty and policy in the Legislature to take care that the industrious classes, by whose hands the great riches derived from this trade are chiefly formed, should be protected from evils (such as have been described), by the Government and the more opulent ranks, who owe so much to their unwearied exertions.

If from the great towns connected with the cotton trade Your Committee turn their attention to those where the population is chiefly employed in the woollen manufactures (the second in point of extent), they regret to have to report, that the evidence adduced before them shows nearly the same neglect as to any effective regulations to provide for the comfort, or insure the health of the labouring community.

Thus, in Leeds, with a population of above 80,000 persons⁽⁶⁾, the state of the streets, courts, and dwellings inhabited by the working classes appears greatly neglected; paving, sewerage, and cleansing (as applicable to the health and comfort of these workmen) seem seldom thought of, and never enforced.

The Report of the Statistical Committee of the Town Council of Leeds, giving a detailed account of the state of the town, has been fully confirmed by Dr. Williamson, a physician long resident in Leeds, and well acquainted with the facts; the details are given in evidence, p. 96, &c. A few extracts will give a sample of the rest.

Referring to the condition of one ward (a populous district) the question is put: "All the streets and dwellings in this ward are stated to be more or less deficient in sewerage, unpaved, full of holes, with deep channels formed by the rain intersecting the roads, and annoying the passengers, sometimes rendered untenable by the overflowing of sewers and other more offensive drains, with ash-holes, &c. exposed to public view, and never emptied; or being wholly wanting, as is frequently the case, the refuse is accumulated in cellars, piled against the walls, or thrown into the streets; is that an accurate description?—A. It is an accurate description of the condition of the streets."

Referring to one neglected and filthy locality, the witness says, "From that yard I have reason to know cases of malignant fever are continually sent to our Fever Hospital." The district called the North East Ward (in which out of 16,269 inhabitants, 15,399 are of the working classes) is thus described: As containing numerous streets, "having dangerous excavations, bad drainage, little or no sewerage, here and there pieces of stagnant water, ash-holes exposed, out offices, without doors or seats, very unsafe," &c.

Similar or worse accounts are given of various other districts, detailing the evils arising from houses built in close courts, often back to back, frequently with no thorough draught of air, without any conveniences for cleanliness or decency, with no effective drainage, inspection, or system of paving or cleansing.

The general conclusion of the Town Council is: "That the greater part of the town is in a most filthy condition, which demands an immediate remedy, a remedy which does not seem attainable under any local Act now existing, but

⁽⁶⁾ 123,390 in the town and liberties of Leeds in 1831, and the increase has been very great since that time

but calls for an especial enactment, which is doubtless required (they say) not only by Leeds, but more or less by every town in the empire."

1716.

After referring to the evils constantly arising from the bad construction and position of their dwellings, the witness is asked: "Would it not then be of the first consequence to the welfare of the working classes, that there should be some general regulation laid down, either in a general Building Act or some Act generally applicable, not for interfering with the ordinary construction of houses, but for preventing their being built in such a form and manner as experience has shown is highly detrimental to the health of the poorer inhabitants?"—To which Dr. Williamson replies: "The working classes are now exposed to the cupidity and defective arrangements of their landlords, and they appear to me to require the protection of some such general enactment to remedy the evils." The necessity and practicability of such a remedy is spoken to by several other witnesses and experienced builders (⁶).

1749.

The witness having stated that Leeds had doubled its population within 30 years, is asked, "During that time it appears from the report which you have confirmed, that no due provision and regulation has been made with respect to drainage, sewerage, and cleansing, ventilation and building, and for the supply of water for this vast community?—A. Certainly not." And the witness then expresses his opinion of the necessity of legislative assistance.

Your Committee have inquired into the state of several other densely-peopled towns, and refer to the evidence given respecting them, not thinking it necessary to enter into detail more than by stating, that they all appear to stand in need, more or less, of measures calculated to enforce sanitary regulations for the benefit of the humbler classes (⁷).

BIRMINGHAM.

Your Committee are, however, happy to remark, that the great town of Birmingham, inhabited by so many industrious mechanics, so long celebrated for their skill and ingenuity, appears to form rather a favourable contrast, in several particulars, with the state of other large towns.

The nature of the employment generally appears not injurious to health; the general custom of each family living in a separate dwelling is conducive to comfort and cleanliness, and the good site of the town, and the dry and absorbent nature of the soil, are very great natural advantages. Still there are many regulations of great consequence to the health and comfort of the inhabitants which appear neglected (⁸), to some of which Your Committee will advert in the remedies they recommend. Some sanitary regulations respecting the common lodging-houses appear absolutely necessary for the safety of the community (⁹).

In addition to their inquiry into the state of many of the large towns of England, Your Committee also directed their attention to the condition of Dublin and Glasgow. With respect to the former, although many improvements may be made, and additional sanitary regulations are absolutely necessary, they do not think it necessary to do more than direct attention to the able evidence of Dr. Maunsell respecting it, containing many valuable suggestions.

GLASGOW.

1090.

With regard to Glasgow, however, they are sorry to observe that the details are of the most melancholy and afflicting nature. An intelligent witness, who has had every means of knowledge, states, "that penury, dirt, misery, drunkenness,

(⁶) *Vide* evidence of Mr. J. White, Mr. Allason, Mr. Green, Mr. Cubitt, &c.

(⁷) *Vide* evidence as to Bolton, population 50,000, Mr. Ashworth; Ashton, Staleybridge, and Dukinfield, population 60,000, Mr. Riddall Wood, Mr. Ashton; Bradford, population 90,000, Mr. Ellison, Dr. Williamson.

(⁸) There are many houses built back to back in the Bordersley district.—*Vide* Riddall Wood's evidence, 2270, &c.

(⁹) Evidence of Mr. Hodson, Riddall Wood, as to Hull, &c., p. 140.

eness, disease, and crime culminate in Glasgow to a pitch unparalleled in Great Britain." And in another place, "I did not believe, until I visited the wynds of Glasgow, that so large an amount of filth, crime, misery, and disease existed in one spot in any civilized country."

The witness was accompanied by the magistrates and heads of the police, and describes the want of ventilation, sewerage, cleansing, and attention to the health of the poorer inhabitants in the lower parts of the town as most grievous in its effects. The result is summed up in the following terms:—
 "Such being the state of things ⁽¹⁾ in large districts of Glasgow, it is not surprising that *the number of persons who died last year was 10,270, being at the rate of one in 24⁶/₁₀ to the whole population, or that out of that number 2,180 died of typhus fever, which never leaves Glasgow.*" These melancholy details, which can scarcely be read without shuddering, are amply confirmed by Dr. Cowan, a physician resident in the town, whose work, called "Vital Statistics," has been laid before Your Committee, and its general accuracy proved. It is there stated, and confirmed in evidence, that the rate of mortality in Glasgow has increased most rapidly, and is thus given in round numbers: 1821, 1 in 39; 1831, 1 in 30; 1835, 1 in 29; 1838, 1 in 26; thus showing the frightful increase from 1 in 39 to 1 in 26 in 17 years ⁽²⁾.

1089.

And, again, it is shown that the mortality in children under 10 years of age has risen from 1 in 75 in 1821 to 1 in 48 in 1839. "Fever, it is stated, has been gradually increasing in the city of Glasgow, and its victims constitute within a fraction of 55 out of every 100 patients treated in our hospitals." "This increase has been during a period of great prosperity." The report quoted goes on to say, "We may safely assume that the 12,895 individuals treated in the fever hospitals during the last seven years, all, with few exceptions, depending on their daily labour, and extending the benefit of that labour to others, were out of employment for a period of six weeks."

1115

Dr. Cowan adds, "The mortality bill of 1837 exhibits a rate of mortality inferring an intensity of misery and suffering unequalled in Britain, and not surpassed in any town we are acquainted with on the Continent of Europe." Remedial measures are suggested in the following words: "A few thousand pounds judiciously expended in opening up the districts most densely populated, and in other obvious ways, would greatly tend to alleviate the pressure of our heaviest municipal tax, the fever tax."

1137

1153

Your Committee would now turn from the melancholy details, a portion of which they have thought it right to insert in their Report, and would state generally, that although the main evils complained of, and proved before them, appear to arise from the want of any regulations as to buildings and ventilation, and the deficiency in sewerage, cleansing, and other sanitary provisions, yet there appears to be some important improvement necessary referable to special sources of illness in certain districts, as particularly, 1st, The existence of burial places in the midst of populous neighbourhoods ⁽³⁾.

1140

2d, Local nuisances from some noxious business, affecting the health of the vicinity ⁽⁴⁾.

3d, The neglected and dangerous state of low lodging-houses, frequented by a wretched and migratory population, who often carry fever and other disorders into distant districts ⁽⁵⁾.

Independent

⁽¹⁾ It appeared two-thirds of the children between 3 and 12 received no instruction whatever, 1101.

⁽²⁾ J. C. Symons, p. 63, Q. 1114.

⁽³⁾ Vide Mr. Walker's evidence, also Dr. Arnott's.

⁽⁴⁾ Vide Mr. Moseley's testimony.

⁽⁵⁾ Vide statement of Mr. Riddall Wood, Hodson, Dr. Williamson, &c.

Independent of the physical evils to the working classes arising from the causes before adverted to, Your Committee are desirous to express the strong opinion they entertain, confirmed by the testimony of many of the witnesses examined, that the dirt, damp, and discomfort so frequently found in and about the habitations of the poorer people in these great towns, has a most pernicious and powerful effect on their moral feelings, induces habits of recklessness and disregard of cleanliness, and all proper pride in personal appearance, and thereby takes away a strong and useful stimulus to industry and exertion⁽⁶⁾.

The wife, hopeless of being able to make his home comfortable to her husband, abandons all endeavours for the purpose, neglect leads to neglect, recrimination follows reproof, and their children are brought up amidst dirt and wretchedness, with the example of constant domestic disputes before them. Nor can it be doubtful to those who trace the effects of such causes, that the humbler classes are often induced or driven by the want of comfort at home, and by the gloomy prospect around them, to have recourse to dram-drinking, the fertile parent of innumerable ills⁽⁷⁾.

Your Committee have thus laid before The House an imperfect abstract of the facts proved before them in evidence, showing the neglect of due sanitary regulations applicable to improve the health and increase the comfort of great bodies of the poorer classes.

They have traced a few of the more prominent evils which appear to spring from this neglect, and have endeavoured to show the ill effects produced by these causes in degrading the character of their humbler fellow-subjects, in producing crime, disease, and discontent, and in counteracting in great measure (as regards the younger portion of the population) those moral and religious impressions which they might otherwise receive from education where it is afforded to them⁽⁸⁾.

The cost to the country, arising from these combined causes, it might be difficult to estimate with exactness, but there can be no doubt that it is enormous. Thus it is estimated that every person in the Fever Hospital (12,895 in seven years) in Glasgow loses six weeks employment, which, calculated at 7s. 6d. per week, would amount to 29,004*l.* lost to the community, besides the cost of attendance and support; this has been calculated, *where the patient recovers*, at 1*l.* per case⁽⁹⁾, and adds here 12,895*l.* to the account of loss; chiefly owing to the want of proper sanitary regulations.

In proportion as the working classes in these great cities (rapidly increasing every year) and their children are injuriously affected in their physical condition and their moral characters by the causes alluded to, just in that proportion will their value to the community be diminished, and their cost to the kingdom increased. The property which the country has in their useful labours will be so far lessened, and the unproductive outlay necessary to maintain and restrain them so far augmented.

This consideration will not be thought beyond the province of Your Committee when it is remembered that in the remedies they propose some outlay of expense must necessarily occur; yet on reflection it is hoped that they will be justified in the conclusion they have come to, that ultimately a great saving to the community will thereby take place; and even were that not the case, that some such measures are urgently called for, as claims of humanity and
justice

⁽⁶⁾ On this point see the evidence of Drs. Duncan, Williamson, Arnott, S. Smith, Maunsell, Fletcher, &c.

⁽⁷⁾ The increase of consumption of spirits in Great Britain and Ireland has been from 9,200,000 gallons in 1817, to 29,200,000 in 1837; and the number of criminal commitments in England and Wales from 4,600 in 1805, to 22,000 in 1838.—*Vide* Returns to Parliament.

⁽⁸⁾ *Vide* evidence of medical men examined; also Messrs. Pennethorne, 2885, and Fletcher

⁽⁹⁾ Report on Sanatory State of Labouring Classes about the Metropolis, p. 6.

justice to great multitudes of our fellow men, and as necessary not less for the welfare of the poor than the safety of property and the security of the rich (1).

REMEDIES.

The remedies which Your Committee would propose in order to carry out the spirit of "Sanatory Regulations for the benefit of the Inhabitants of the Great Towns of the Realm," are several; some of a prospective, and others of a retrospective operation.

R

The first measure they recommend is, a general Building Act, applicable to towns now, or at any future time, comprizing a certain amount of population; laying down regulations respecting the construction of certain rates of houses (well understood among builders) which are fitted for the dwellings of the working classes.

The regulations would be framed so as to interfere no farther with every one's right to manage his own property than was necessary to protect the health of the community; nor would they extend beyond what the necessity of that urgent duty of Government justified. Such regulations would fall strictly under that rule of public law universally acknowledged, which lays down as a maxim, "*Sic utere tuo ut non alienum ledas.*"

These regulations would forbid and prevent such forms of construction specified, as experience and undoubted testimony show to be inconsistent with health. These would embrace,

1. Cellar dwellings, unless with areas in front and back, and with sewers below the level of the floors.
2. Rows of houses erected in close courts, built up at the end.
3. Rows of dwellings built back to back, so as to prevent any thorough ventilation.

These regulations so far would be of a preventive character, and would not otherwise interfere with the discretion of builders.

There are, however, a few other rules which ought to be introduced into such an Act; one of the most important is, to require that before and behind every row of houses of this description a certain space should be left open, proportioned to the height of the houses. What this proportion should be would be matter of consideration. Experienced builders, who have given evidence before Your Committee (and who are unanimous in opinion as to the necessity of such a provision) (2), differ slightly as to details, one proposing the space in front should be the height of the houses themselves, whilst another thinks two-thirds might be sufficient; and in like measure with regard to the space necessary to be left open at the back of these small houses.

Some provisions have likewise been suggested as proper to be inserted in a Building Act, which might insure to these humble classes of houses such conveniences as are absolutely necessary for health and decency, and such receptacles for refuse, ashes, &c., as cannot be dispensed with consistent with cleanliness

(1) "The mortality of cities in England and Wales," says a valuable authority, "is high, but it may be much reduced. A good general system of sewers, the intersection of the dense crowded districts of the metropolis by a few spacious streets, and a park in the east end of London, would probably diminish the annual deaths by several thousands, prevent many years of sickness, and add several years to the lives of the entire population. Similar improvements would have the same effect in the other cities of the empire; the poorer classes would be benefited by these measures, and the poor-rates reduced. But all classes of the community are directly interested in their adoption, for the epidemics which arise in the east end of the town do not stay there; they travel to the west end, and prove fatal in wide streets and squares."—Mr. Farr, Appendix to Report of Registrar General.

(2) *Vide* evidence of Messrs. White, Smith, Cubitt, Allason, &c.

liness and comfort. There should also be a sufficient underground drain communicating with the common sewer.

Some other beneficial provisions may probably be sanctioned as proper for a general Building Act; but these are the only new provisions which appear to Your Committee essentially necessary for the welfare of the working classes.

Regulations as to the thickness of party walls, to hinder the spread of fires, and others to prevent overhanging projections and dangerous chimneys, are now in the Building Act applicable to the metropolis, and probably in some provincial Acts, and would of course be necessary.

In these suggestions Your Committee have kept in view the policy of interfering as little as possible with private property, and no farther than the strict necessity of the case justified.

There is in the evidence abundant proof of the absolute want of some such provisions, and of the wide-spread evils and misery resulting from their neglect. They are in the nature strictly of sanitary regulations, and are only the fulfilment of one of the first duties of a humane Government, to protect those who cannot protect themselves⁽³⁾.

It is matter of deep regret to Your Committee that some such Act as they suggest did not engage the attention of Parliament at the beginning of the century, before our great towns were so densely populated, and so many dwellings for the working classes had been built in contravention of the proposed rules; had such been the case, they cannot doubt but much of the discomfort and sufferings which have been detailed before them would have been prevented.

Your Committee are informed that some years since a general Building Act, which would probably have contained some regulations like those they recommend, was under the consideration of the Government; but, amid the changes which subsequently took place, was laid aside⁽⁴⁾.

The obvious necessity of some such enactment, arising from the evils detailed before Your Committee, might perhaps justify them in simply but earnestly recommending it to the consideration of Parliament; but feeling, as they do, the great importance of its speedy adoption for the benefit of a rapidly increasing and valuable class of their humbler fellow-subjects, they are induced to consider and reply to some objections which might be brought against it.

It may be said, that such regulations as have been spoken of, forbidding buildings being erected in certain forms considered prejudicial to health, is an interference with private property. This is doubtless the case, but appears to be amply justified on the plea of the general good; and the same necessity is constantly held to justify similar interference, in various Acts of Parliament for the construction of roads, railways, canals, and in the enforcement of regulations regarding police, quarantine, &c.

A more serious objection is, that such regulations, by throwing some difficulties in the way of erecting closely-packed dwellings for the working classes, would render them dearer than at present, and increase the difficulty which they often find to procure habitations in populous cities. With respect to such part of the proposed regulations as would insure a better arrangement of dwellings on the same space (as by insuring courts and streets to be open at each end), this objection would not apply. But undoubtedly the effect of some of the rules suggested for a Building Act would be to improve the dwellings of the working classes, but at a greater cost than before.

The evidence, however, of experienced builders leads Your Committee to believe that this cost would not be very materially increased by prospective regulations

(³) *Vide* evidence of Messrs. J. White, Pennethorne, T. Allason, Smith, Cubitt, &c.; Drs. Duncan, Williamson, &c.

(⁴) *Vide* Mr. J. White's evidence.

regulations of the nature described. The cost of a little increased space of ground before it is built upon, and before additional value is given to it by the proximity of manufactories, shops, roads, and streets, is very different and much less than afterwards; but the rules suggested would apply to it when open, and thus comparatively of less cost⁽⁵⁾.

The outlay on the houses themselves in construction and materials (which are the main points of cost) might be the same, whether there are 20 or 15 on the same number of square yards; yet the effect on the health and comfort of the inmates would be very different in one case from the other. Still it must be admitted, that if a larger space of ground is required for a given number of dwellings, and they are constructed in a better and more costly manner, and have appendant to them some conveniences which they are now without, that the rent to be paid for them must be somewhat higher; but Your Committee assert with confidence, that this addition will be amply compensated to the working classes by the additional convenience and comfort they will enjoy, and that they will gain in freedom from disease, which now so frequently attacks them and their children, a saving greatly exceeding their outlay⁽⁶⁾. The chief property of these persons is their labour. The evidence shows how often this is interrupted by fevers and other disorders, arising from the causes adverted to. Regulations, therefore, which may protect them from these evils, and allow them the uninterrupted advantage of the wages derived from their labour, would more than make up to them some augmentation of rent.

It must be borne in mind that without some such improvement in the construction of his dwelling, and the conveniences appendant to it, as are suggested, it is almost impossible for a working man's home to be made comfortable, or to have any attractions for him, or that he can in any way make the most of his daily earnings, and he is thereby driven to drinking as a resource, as is stated by many witnesses examined.

Another remedial measure, which appears to Your Committee absolutely necessary to facilitate proper sanitary regulations in great towns, is a general Act for the sewerage of these densely-peopled communities.

At present these Acts are partial in their operation and extent, varying in their provisions, and very defective in the powers they give.

A reference to the evidence collected by Your Committee will show how great has been the neglect of the sewerage and drainage in some of the most densely-peopled parts of London, and the large provincial towns, and how much misery and disease have been entailed on the poorer classes of inhabitants in consequence. It cannot be denied, however, that considerable attention has been directed to this point within the last 12 years, and that great improvements have been effected during that period; still the want of any general system of operation, and the defective powers possessed by the commissioners, both in the metropolis and country towns, in which they have been established by local Acts, have altogether prevented the extension and construction of sewers upon a scale commensurate with the increase of population. Your Committee cannot help repeating their conviction, that, in addition to the physical evils which this want of the means of carrying off the refuse and impurities from their dwellings entails upon the poorer classes, it is impossible to deny, from the evidence before them, that their moral habits are affected by the same

GENERAL
SEWERAGE /

SEWERAGE
DRAINAGE

⁽⁵⁾ *Vide* Mr. Cubitt's evidence, and Mr. Smith's.

⁽⁶⁾ The improvement of their general character would make them better tenants, less likely to injure their habitations, more punctual in their payments, and by giving less trouble, and requiring less watching, compensating for some little additional outlay.

same causes. That a constant residence in a tainted and polluted atmosphere, whilst it predisposes them to disease, and renders them less able to repel its attacks, also produces a degradation of moral character, an indifference to the common decencies of life, and an utter recklessness of all those comforts which persons in their station might be expected to enjoy⁽⁴⁾.

The effect of this utter prostration of energy, and of all the better feelings of the mind, has been to reduce multitudes, who might otherwise have passed with credit through their humble spheres, to have recourse to ardent spirits as a desperate alleviation of their wretchedness; and Your Committee need hardly point out, how surely this irresistible temptation leads, step by step, to habitual dissipation and debauchery⁽⁵⁾.

Your Committee are perfectly aware, that wherever large masses of the labouring orders are collected together in towns, it is almost hopeless to enforce that strict attention to household cleanliness which is maintained amongst those of the same rank in rural districts; but it is for this very reason, and to counteract this unfortunate tendency to a neglect of cleanliness and comfort, that Your Committee deem it essential that every practicable means should be adopted to provide, at all events, against the worst of the evils detailed in the evidence before them, and, by due sanitary regulations, to place the poorer classes in a condition to avail themselves, by a little exertion, of those conveniences which experience has proved necessary to remove the accumulated impurities of large towns.

BOARD
HEALTH.

In pursuance of these principles, and with the view of affording to the poorer classes congregated in towns some protection from the evils to which, from the confined nature of their dwellings, and the cupidity of speculators, they are frequently exposed, Your Committee are of opinion that it would be advisable to establish, in every town containing a population of a certain amount, a Board of Health, whose duty it should be to examine into such circumstances and occurrences within their district as are prejudicial to the general health of the inhabitants; to call the attention of the Commissioners of Sewers, and any other local authorities that might be concerned, to such nuisances, and to devise and suggest remedies⁽⁶⁾. They should report their proceedings annually to the Central Board of Health, if such a Board be constituted, and if not, to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for presentation to Parliament, by which means publicity would be insured to their proceedings, and much useful information collected and diffused. These Boards of Health might be appointed by the Boards of Guardians, or by the Town Councils in corporate towns, or directly by the rate-payers.

It is obvious that a portion of such Boards should always consist of members of the medical profession, and Your Committee are inclined to think, that a class of persons peculiarly pointed out by the nature of their avocations for a duty of this sort, are the practitioners attached to the Poor Law Unions, who, being in the daily habit of visiting the most destitute and neglected portion of the

(4) It seems almost impossible for a poor but decent family, coming to reside in one of those close neglected situations (so frequently described in the Evidence), to preserve any good habits which they or their children may have acquired; evil example, and close contact with those who are careless as to appearance, will soon reduce them to the common level.

(5) In the official circular issued by the Poor Law Commissioner on the 9th March last, it is stated, p. 11, that nearly 24 millions (about four times the amount expended in poor-rates) is annually spent in ardent spirits, chiefly consumed by the labouring classes; and by a calculation made by Mr. J. C. Symons, one of the witnesses before your Committee, Q. 1087, it appears that the quantity of spirits consumed in England is 7 ½ pints per head, in Ireland rather more than 13 pints, and in Scotland 23 pints, per head per annum.

(6) Dr. Arnott's Evidence, p. 37.

the community, must become acquainted with the condition of the localities in which they reside, and with the prevalence of those disorders which result from the absence of public sanitary regulations.

Such Boards of Health would probably each have a clerk (paid for his services), whose duty it would be to make minutes of the proceedings, and give such returns, in a short tabular form, as might be useful for reference, and important as affording easy information on a subject of such vital interest to the people.

The principal duty and object of these Boards of Health would be precautionary and preventive; to turn the public attention to the causes of illness, and to suggest means by which the sources of contagion might be removed; and in this way Your Committee believe a great saving of expense would take place eventually, and that the necessary outlay would be compensated by the diminution, not only of suffering, but of actual cost to the community.

Your Committee have next to suggest that facilities be afforded for the establishment in towns and newly-extended suburbs of an administrative authority for drainage and sewerage, without the necessity of incurring the expense and delay of a local Act.

This desirable object might be effected by passing an Act for this country, framed upon similar principles to the 9 Geo. 4, c. 82, which is restricted to Ireland, and by which, on the requisition of 21 householders, a public meeting may be called of all the inhabitants of houses rated at 5*l.* and upwards; this meeting is empowered to decide upon the appointment of commissioners in whom are vested the necessary powers for the cleansing, draining, paving, and lighting of the town. This Act has been already adopted in about 60 towns with general satisfaction. Your Committee think it would be a good arrangement that these rates should be borne by the landlord, and that some facilities for that purpose should be given.

GENERAL
SEWERAGE A

Your Committee have been informed that doubts exist as to the powers possessed by some Commissioners of Sewers of constructing new sewers, they therefore recommend that the continuance of these doubts be obviated; and also that some additional powers, which appear absolutely necessary for remedying the evils which they have stated, be granted to existing Commissions of Sewers, as well as to those which may hereafter be constituted (').

1. That of enforcing adequate sewerage for rows or streets of houses which may hereafter be erected; the expense of construction to be mainly charged upon the proprietors of the houses, while that of future repairs will fall upon the general rate of the district.

2. That of enforcing a communication between private dwellings and the adjacent main sewer, at the expense of the proprietors of those dwellings, and the repairs to be placed under the superintendence of the officers employed by the Commissioners of Sewers.

3. That of prohibiting the sinking of cess-pools below the level of the main sewers, and any other similar powers which may be deemed necessary for the public benefit.

Your Committee believe it would also be of the greatest advantage to the inhabitants of great towns if an inspector was appointed to enforce the due execution of sanitary regulations. They think such an officer should (whether appointed by the rate-payers, or the guardians of the poor whom they have chosen,) have the power of proceeding by indictment to abate nuisances, an old remedy of the English law, which, though somewhat in disuse, it seems quite necessary to revive and extend, to prevent and put down injury to multitudes

INSPECTOR

(') *Vide* evidence of Mr. Peeke, 2024; Mr. Baker, 1580; Drew, 1519, &c.
384.

tudes⁽¹⁾. At present, for want of some such guardian of public rights, they are continually encroached upon, and nuisances injurious to the health, comfort, and property of the people (especially of the humbler classes) are shown by the evidence adduced before the Committee to be constantly increasing. It would be the duty of such an officer to prevent any encroachment on or diversion of highways, or open spaces of ground in the enjoyment of the public.

Your Committee think that the inspector should report from time to time the state of his district to the Board of Health, constituted as before suggested.

Your Committee have thus given an outline of the principal remedial measures they propose. They have been obliged to detail these at considerable length, which is perhaps inseparable from the magnitude and importance of the subject.

Before, however, they conclude their Report, they would state that there are several points of the utmost consequence to the health of the inhabitants of our great towns, which they content themselves with barely enumerating, because they feel assured that if the remedial suggestions they have made were acted upon, these matters would immediately be attended to.

Thus, if the legislative enactments suggested were passed, if Boards of Health and district inspectors were appointed, there can be little doubt that these subjects would soon attract the attention their importance deserves, and if legislative aid were wanted, it would in such case be promptly afforded.

1. The custom of continuing burying-grounds, crowded with constant additions of corpses, in the midst of populous cities, is spoken of by several witnesses as most injurious to health⁽²⁾.

2. The importance of an ample and due supply of water within the reach and means of the humbler classes has been made evident to all who have attended to the subject, and appears lamentably deficient in several populous and increasing communities.

3. The augmentation of buildings in the vicinities of these crowded cities seem to call for provisions to insure some open spaces being preserved, calculated for public walks, essential to the health and comfort of the poorer classes. This was adverted to and recommended by the Report of a former Committee⁽³⁾; it presses more and more as the population of these great towns rapidly increases, and many witnesses have spoken of the growing necessity for some such provision⁽⁴⁾.

4. Some inspection and power of regulation of the humbler class of lodging-houses seems absolutely necessary for the health of the people. They are shown, by evidence before Your Committee, to be now utterly neglected; that there are many in all our great towns habitually in a filthy condition, the abode of fever and other contagious disorders, destitute of all sanatory regulations, and inhabited from time to time by a migratory and shifting population. Thus the diseases which are frequently taken in these dirty and ill-ventilated places are spread about the country, to the manifest danger of the people.

5. Wherever local circumstances give the power to establish public bathing places for the use of the poorer classes, such a step would be highly beneficial,
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⁽¹⁾ *Vide* cases of nuisance, evidence, Messrs. Moseley and Cubitt's.

⁽²⁾ *Vide* especially Mr. Walker's.

⁽³⁾ *Vide* Report of Committee on Public Walks in the vicinity of populous Cities, 1832, and Mr. Fletcher's evidence, 1316.

⁽⁴⁾ The necessity of some play-grounds adjacent to the schools frequented by the children of the poorer inhabitants in great cities, is spoken to by almost every medical witness; the advantage in moral effect of relaxation from constant confinement is insisted on by all whose attention was directed to the subject.

and the cost in manufacturing towns, where many steam-engines are employed, would not, it appears, be considerable ⁽⁵⁾.

Your Committee have now nearly completed their outline of the sanitary regulations they recommend to the consideration of Parliament to prevent as far as practicable the recurrence and increase of circumstances highly injurious to the health and comfort of the inhabitants of our great towns and populous districts.

They cannot, however, conclude the task assigned to them, without endeavouring to suggest some method by which the existing evils may be somewhat removed, and the extent of suffering diminished.

It will be evident to any one who has considered this Report, or looked into the evidence on which it is founded, that much of the unhealthiness of particular groups of dwellings, and sometimes of a whole district, arises from the want of some local improvement ⁽⁶⁾, in the removal of some obstruction to ventilation or drainage.

Thus, in some of the crowded and unhealthy places described, the opening of a fresh thoroughfare, giving light and air, would not only remove or abate the evil, but would give additional value to the property through which it passed.

Sometimes taking down a single house which blocked up the end of a street, or of one of those miserable courts described in the evidence, would greatly benefit all the others near ⁽⁷⁾, and add to their worth much more than their fair share of the cost of the whole improvement; or the case may be that the additional value given to the dwellings in the immediate vicinity of the proposed sanitary improvement would very nearly, if fairly estimated, cover the expense, requiring a small proportion only to be made up from some other fund.

This supposition may be varied in other ways, and is applicable to other improvements of almost any description, by which additional value is given in different proportions, to private property, and at the same time the salubrity of the vicinity is increased.

Yet at present, however necessary for health or beneficial to private property such improvements may be, they cannot be effected, unless in each spot there be a special Act of Parliament for the purpose, which is the case in very few places. Where, however, such an Act exists, it is generally applicable only to particular improvements specified in the Bill; it only extends to cases where some fund already exists for defraying the expenses, and it gives no power of assessing the whole district benefited, or of appointing apportioners to decide in what proportions the immediate vicinity is augmented in value, and ought to be assessed in consequence. Thus, a single obstinate and unreasonable proprietor may, and frequently does, prevent an improvement beneficial to a whole neighbourhood, and even to himself; but if all the persons interested be willing to concur in the improvement, there are frequently legal disabilities which prevent their consent being available, as leases, entails, &c. Sometimes the power of exchange or sale, or long leases of a small portion of a settled property; would facilitate an improvement widely beneficial, but this now requires in each case a separate Act of Parliament ⁽⁸⁾.

Viewing, therefore, the necessity and advantage of such local improvements, and the difficulties which now prevent them, Your Committee beg to recommend

⁽⁵⁾ *Vide* Mr. Sowten's evidence; also Mr. Fletcher's, p. 74, 1305.

⁽⁶⁾ *Vide* evidence, 1140, 2539, &c. Mr. Pennethorne's, p. 170.

⁽⁷⁾ *Vide* Dr. Duncan's evidence, p. 151, 2539, &c.

⁽⁸⁾ *Vide* Report of Committee on Public Walks, evidence of Mr. J. White, &c.

General Act to aid
local Improve-
ments.

recommend the introduction of a general Act (extending to all towns above a certain population) to facilitate such improvements. They venture to suggest that such an Act should contain provisions calculated to obviate the difficulties pointed out; that it should lay down well-considered regulations as to the forms of proceeding; should enable willing parties to carry out beneficial alterations; should empower a certain majority (perhaps two-thirds) of the rate-payers of any district to adopt the provisions of the Act, and bind the minority; empower them to choose trustees or commissioners to fulfil the enactments, raise rates, purchase property, complete improvements, &c.

Your Committee cannot but wish that such an Act, so essential to the welfare of these densely-peopled districts, should contain clauses to facilitate the commencement of public improvements necessary for health at the suggestion of the Board of Health, and for this purpose that, under due provisions, the Board should have the power of ordering surveys and estimates to a limited amount. Your Committee also think that wherever the Government, individuals, or any public body shall be willing to provide a certain proportion (as one-fourth or one-third) of the estimate of any such improvement, that there should be a power to enable such Commissioners to raise a rate for the remainder. In this way they believe many spirited and benevolent persons would generously come forward to assist and stimulate such beneficial public improvements, which without some such facilities and provisions will never be made.

How far it might be advisable to enable the Lords of Her Majesty's Treasury, in certain urgent cases, to advance on good security loans of Exchequer Bills to facilitate such improvements, Your Committee will not undertake to determine.

Your Committee have thus ventured to recommend legislative measures to assist in the necessary work of laying down and enforcing sanitary regulations for the benefit of the inhabitants of the large towns of this realm. They cannot conclude this Report, which they submit to the consideration of The House, without most earnestly recommending all those who, by fortune, station, or trust, are placed in a position to assist in carrying out these views, to exert themselves to the utmost, and without delay, in aiding the improvement suggested in their several towns and neighbourhoods. Whilst Your Committee is earnestly desirous legislative aid should be given, they are yet aware, that with zeal, energy, and perseverance much might be done, even with the present imperfect powers, by individual and combined exertion, to lay the foundation of measures which would afterwards be extended and perfected to the permanent benefit of the community.

17 June 1840.

 PROCEEDINGS on the Days in which no Witnesses were Examined.

Lunæ, 23^o die Martii, 1840.

PRESENT.

Mr. Slaney.		Mr. Richard Walker.
Mr. Cowper.		Mr. Baines.
Mr. Ingham.		Mr. Brotherton.
Mr. Tufnell.		Mr. W. Patten.
Mr. Greene.		Mr. J. Ponsoby.
Lord J. Stuart.		

Motion made (Lord J. Stuart)—That Mr. Slaney do take the Chair.—Agreed to,
Committee deliberated on course of proceedings.

[Adjourned to Wednesday, Twelve o'clock.

Lunæ, 15^o die Junii, 1840.

Mr. SLANEY in the Chair.

Mr. Vigors.		Mr. Cowper.
Mr. Oswald.		Mr. Greene.
Lord J. Stuart.		Mr. Tufnell.
Mr. Mackinnon.		

Report further considered, and agreed to.

Ordered to report.

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